

# Preventing Abuse Against Adults with Disabilities

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PRAESIDIUM

Our Passion. Your Protection.

# About Praesidium

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- Incorporated in 1992
- National leader in abuse risk management
- Over 4,000 clients internationally
- Train, screen, investigate, assess, and accredit organizations worldwide

# The Praesidium Safety Equation<sup>®</sup>

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# What We Believe

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- Abuse can be prevented
- Everyone is responsible for preventing abuse
- Abuse prevention requires a commitment
- Commitment starts at the top

# Scope of the Problem

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- 1 in 4 girls
- 1 in 6 boys
- Adults with disabilities are 2-3 times more likely to experience violent crime
- Adults with disabilities are 2 times more likely to be sexually assaulted
- 300% increase in client-to-client abuse
- 80% of abuse does not get reported

# Impacts of Abuse on Your Organization

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- Loss of focus on your mission
- Loss of financial resources for programming
- Decreased productivity
- Decreased employee morale
- Increased employee turnover
- Battered reputation

# Three Risks You Face

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1. Adult-to-Client Abuse
2. Client-to-Client Abuse
3. False Allegations

# Who Abuses? Adult Offenders

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- Type I: Preferential
- Type II: Situational
- Type III: Indiscriminate



# How Offenders Operate

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The APC's:

- **Access**
- **Privacy**
- **Control**

# Policies

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## **Importance:**

Policies are important because they communicate a zero tolerance for abuse and create a bandwidth of acceptable behavior.

## **Best Practices:**

- Define boundaries
- Create institutional memory
- Communicate effectively

# Red-Flag Behaviors in Adults

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## Physical

- Wrestles
- Tickles
- Massages
- Hugs too long or too often
- Lap-sits older children

## Psychological

- Isolates clients from caregivers and peers
- Creates personal friendships
- Chooses favorites
- Overly involved

## Behavioral

- Encourages breaking rules
- Keeps secrets
- Encourages alcohol use
- Encourages drug use
- Encourages use of porn
- Lets clients break caregivers' rules



# Protecting Yourself from False Allegations

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- Follow policies about appropriate and inappropriate physical affection
- Use the rule of “three or more”
- Don’t show favoritism
- Avoid, address, and respond to crushes
- No secrets with clients
- No gift-giving to clients
- Do not discuss your weekend activities or sex life
- When in doubt, **document**

# Screening & Selection

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## **Importance:**

Screening and selection are important because they control who has access to your clients.

## **Best Practices:**

- Encourage applicants to self-select out
- Assess abuse risk
- Is verifiable
- Behaviorally-based interview questions
- Integrate all information

# Training

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## **Importance:**

Training is important because it teaches all staff how to perform their role in abuse risk management.

## **Best Practices:**

- Train preventative skill-based content
- Routinely schedule
- Use as “reminders”
- Make an active part of supervision

# Monitoring and Supervision

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## **Importance:**

Monitoring and supervision are important because they decrease the opportunity for privacy and inappropriate behaviors.

## **Best Practices:**

- Monitor clients
- Supervise staff
- Manage high-risk locations
- Manage high-risk activities

# Monitor and Supervise

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## High-Risk Locations:

- Bathrooms
- Showers
- Bedrooms
- Vehicles
- Isolated Areas

## High-Risk Activities:

- Personal care assistance
- Sleeping time
- Periods of transition
- Transportation activities
- Free time
- 1:1



# Training Supervisors

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Ensure supervisors have the necessary skills to prevent abuse.

## Key Skills:

- Evaluate and support
- Supervise and coach
- Assess risk to ensure safety

# Internal Feedback

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## **Importance:**

Internal feedback is important because it sends information about the risk of abuse to all levels in the organization.

## **Best Practices:**

- Incorporate systems for reporting concerns, complaints, and grievances (including an anonymous method)
- Collect and analyze data related to preventing abuse
- Eliminate barriers to reporting

# Consumer Participation

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## **Importance:**

Consumer participation is important because it involves caregivers and clients in abuse prevention.

## **Best Practices:**

- Empower clients to protect themselves from abuse
- Educate on appropriate boundaries with staff
- Provide caregivers and clients with multiple ways to report concerns

# Responding

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## **Importance:**

Responding is important because it results in immediate response to red-flag behavior and to suspicions of abuse.

## **Best Practices:**

- Respond to tremors, not earthquakes
- Treat “near misses” as free lessons
- Procedures for responding to red-flag behaviors and client-to-client incidents
- Use a continuum of responses

# Administrative Practices

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## **Importance:**

Administrative practices are important because they set and enforce zero tolerance.

## **Best Practices:**

- Communicate commitment to safety
- Develop system-wide abuse prevention standards
- Prevent drift from standards

# Questions to Consider

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- Does your agency have written policies that clearly define boundaries?
- Does your screening process assess for abuse risk?
- Do you require all staff to complete training that is preventative, not just reactive?
- Do you have specific procedures for monitoring high-risk activities related to abuse?
- Do you have a written procedure for responding to suspicious behaviors that do not rise to the level of abuse?

# Discounted Services Available to Your Organization as an Irwin Siegel Client

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- Criminal Background Checks
- Risk Assessment and Praesidium Accreditation®

# Contact Us

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